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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 6 October 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I must draw your urgent attention to the alarming situation in Occupied Palestine, particularly in East Jerusalem, where rising tensions are fuelling another cycle of violence, leading to the loss of innocent civilian lives and a steep deterioration of conditions on the ground.

The backdrop to all this is Israel's ongoing foreign occupation of Palestine and its brutal repression, collective punishment and humiliation of the Palestinian civilian population. While the occupying Power persists with its violations and oppressive measures against the Palestinian people, its occupying forces, extremist settlers and religious zealots have unleashed a barrage of violence and terror against the Palestinian people, causing the death of and injury to Palestinian civilians and the destruction of Palestinian homes and property. Moreover, repeated aggression, provocations and incitement, by both Israeli extremists and government officials, against Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rights of Muslim worshippers therein are exacerbating religious sensitivities and have heightened the risk of an outbreak of religious conflict with extremely dangerous ramifications. Immediate international attention is required to bring a halt to Israel's illegal policies and practices, ensure immediate protection to the defenceless Palestinian civilian population and avert the situation from spiralling out of control.

In this regard, I regret to inform that one Palestinian child and two Palestinian youths were killed this past weekend. On 5 October, Israeli occupying forces that had raided the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem killed 13-year-old Abed al-Rahman Shadi Obeidallah, shooting him in the heart, and injuring a teenage boy with live fire. On 4 October, Israeli occupying forces shot in the chest and killed 18-year-old Huthayfa Othman Suleiman in the village of Bala, east of Tulkarem. On the same day, 19-year-old Fadi Samir Mustafa Alloun, from the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Issawiya, was shot dead by Israeli occupying forces as he was

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fleeing from Israeli settlers attempting to attack him and screaming "Death to Arabs", "Kill the Arabs" and other racist and inflammatory comments. While there is video documenting the incident, in which Fadi was shown to have been clearly killed in cold blood by the occupying forces, there is no proof whatsoever of the allegations that he had committed any crime. Furthermore, following his murder, and adding to the grief and suffering of his family, it was reported that occupying forces had stormed the Alloun family home, assaulting women with rods and tasers and damaging furniture.

The occupying Power's lack of respect for Palestinian civilian life has been repeatedly proved in the brutality of its indiscriminate assaults and aggression perpetrated over the past decades against the Palestinian people. Indeed, the Israeli Government has even legislated this lack of respect for human life in new laws relaxing the rules of engagement for the occupying forces in such a manner as to encourage them to shoot to kill Palestinians, including children, with total impunity. Such gruesome violations will only continue if Israel, the occupying Power, continues to be shielded from accountability and absolved of its obligations to comply with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, as the entire civilized world is obliged to do.

In addition to the deaths caused by the excessive, deliberate force used by the Israeli occupying forces, since 3 October alone, approximately 500 Palestinians, including children, have been injured in attacks against civilians in cities and towns throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. At least 184 of the injured were shot with live ammunition and rubber-coated steel bullets by occupying forces or terrorist settlers, who are armed and roaming in gangs and militias, attacking Palestinian civilians, homes, orchards and vehicles, including ambulances, with total impunity.

In Tulkarem, Israel, the occupying Power, deployed snipers on rooftops and fired live ammunition, tear gas and rubber-coated bullets directly at Palestinian civilians. Three young Palestinians were shot with live fire during the clashes, including Omar Jadba, who was seriously wounded, and six more Palestinians were shot by rubber-coated steel bullets. Nineteen-year-old Muhannad Al-Halabi was shot dead by occupying forces in Occupied East Jerusalem following an alleged stabbing attack. At the Qalandiya checkpoint that separates Ramallah from Jerusalem, four civilians were shot with live fire and two others with rubber-coated steel bullets as occupying forces fired directly at protesters. Israeli occupying forces stormed the Arroub refugee camp near Al-Khalil, firing tear gas canisters at Palestinian homes and at protesters, causing many of them to suffer excessive tear gas inhalation. A siege was also imposed on the camp, preventing all Palestinians from entering or leaving. In addition, a Palestinian security officer was assaulted by occupying forces at the Zatara checkpoint, and the Nablus area remained on virtual lockdown overnight, with the Huwwara and Beit Furik checkpoints closed by the Israeli army.

On 1 October, hundreds of Israeli extremist settlers rampaged across Nablus, carrying out multiple violent attacks against Palestinian homes and vehicles and seizing main roads. Over 200 Israeli settlers attempted to raid the town of Huwwara, south of Nablus, under the protection of Israeli occupying forces, while gangs of settlers raided the village of Burin and smashed Palestinian vehicles near the Huwwara checkpoint. In total, more than 15 Palestinian vehicles were damaged by

settlers, including an ambulance en route to aid Palestinians suffering from tear gas inhalation in Burin after occupying forces had fired stun grenades and tear gas canisters into the village. In the village of Beituniya, near Ramallah, Israeli settlers torched a car, and a Palestinian man was injured after they had smashed his vehicle. Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Beit El" attacked Palestinian vehicles near Ramallah as Israeli occupying forces looked on. Settlers also carried out attacks in the village of Sinjil, north of Ramallah, closed a main north-south highway and carried out attacks against Palestinian civilians and property in Al-Khalil and Bethlehem. Settler depravity in Al-Khalil is particularly notorious and continues to be so. On 5 October, settlers violently assaulted two Palestinians, 13-year-old Adham Musallam and 24-year-old Muhammad al-Tarayra.

These are just a few of the incidents that are taking place in an atmosphere of high tension, which is being gravely exacerbated by the occupying Power's deployment of battalions of hundreds of occupying forces throughout cities, towns, villages and refugee camps in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and by its imposition of a discriminatory, illegal ban on Palestinians from entering the Old City in Occupied East Jerusalem and worshipping at Christian and Muslim holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Meanwhile, Israelis and tourists continue to be permitted to enter the Old City and holy sites, and more than 100 extremist Israeli settlers have been allowed to enter Al-Aqsa with the protection and backing of the Israeli Government.

We call on the international community to react to this dangerous escalation and act to protect the Palestinian civilian population under the military occupation of Israel. The international community cannot stand idly by while Israel, the occupying Power, and military forces and extremist settler militias continue their crimes, violence and terror against the Palestinian people, endangering lives, especially our youth, whose vulnerability is most high, as they are clearly being targeted by this reckless and barbaric occupation in deliberate acts of provocation and aggression against the Palestinian civilian population.

The international community, in particular the Security Council, must act responsibly and immediately to de-escalate this crisis and to insist on respect for international law without exception. If Israel, the occupying Power, is permitted to persist with such attacks and illegal measures against the Palestinian people, their land and holy sites with impunity, the situation will surely devolve even further with vastly negative consequences. We urge the Security Council, in line with its duty under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, to act now with a view to addressing this explosive situation, which is threatening to further destabilize the region, and to saving innocent lives. In this regard, the State of Palestine has repeatedly appealed for international protection and calls once again for the protection of the defenceless Palestinian people, who are suffering immensely as a result of the occupying Power's violence and volatility against the civilian population.

Furthermore, with regard to the escalations in Occupied East Jerusalem, and especially at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, we reiterate our unequivocal rejection of all illegal Israeli actions and demand an immediate cessation. It is urgent that firm messages be sent by the international community, backed by consistent actions, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for a cessation of all measures aimed at

illegally and forcibly altering the character, legal status and demography of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and including the holy site of Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

The risks of inaction are dramatically rising with each passing day that Palestinian suffering deepens, and hopes further diminish that this illegitimate, cruel Israeli occupation will ever come to an end and that the legitimate Palestinian aspirations for freedom, rights and peace will ever be realized. Impunity for Israel and its rejection of peace must be seriously confronted before it is too late to salvage whatever small prospects for peace remain. The matter is urgent and cannot withstand delay, and we appeal to the international community, particularly the Security Council, to act forthwith.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 554 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 September 2015 (A/ES-10/691-S/2015/736), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations